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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to explore student response to literature and the influence of classroom experiences on that response. Three novels were selected for study: "The Catcher in the Rye" by J. D. Salinger, "The Grapes of Wrath" by John Steinbeck, and "A Farewell to Arms" by Ernest Hemingway. Each of 54 freshman English students read one of the novels, took notes while reading, and wrote their immediate reactions in class. After three discussion periods, they wrote follow-up reactions. This procedure was repeated with the three novels, resulting in 280 written reports. Responses were coded in seven categories: literary judgment, interpretational, narrational, associational, self-involvement, prescriptive, and miscellaneous. Individual analysis scrutinized the responses of nine subjects chosen on the basis of typical, extreme, and opposite of statistical trends on the three novels. Except for inconclusive findings in the category of self-involvement, the results showed that the students' ways of responding to literature were changed--both statistically and individually--by the study of that literature. Statistically, the study resulted in fewer literary judgments, more interpretations, less retelling of the story, and fewer self-involvement responses. The study resulted in a number of speculations and suggested applications to teaching. (EL)

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Responses of College Freshmen to Three Novels

by James R. Wilson

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DESIGN OF THIS STUDY

To teach literature is to assume that some change will take place in students' perception of literature. The purpose of this study was to determine how students perceive literature and what kind of change occurs.

Fifty-four freshman English students each read a given novel, took notes while reading, and wrote their immediate reactions in class. After three discussion periods they wrote follow-up reactions. This procedure was repeated with three novels, resulting in 280 written reports.

The written responses were coded into seven categories (developed by James R. Squire on the basis of earlier studies) so that a content analysis of the responses could be made. The seven categories were: literary judgment, interpretational, narrational, associational, self involvement, prescriptive, and miscellaneous.

Statistical analysis consisted in treatment of 19,000 responses by a parametric method for appropriate categories and by a nonparametric method for the other categories.

Individual analysis scrutinized in depth the responses of nine subjects chosen on the basis of typical, extreme, and opposite of statistical trends on the three novels.

National Council of Teachers of English

Research Report No. 7

Responses of College Freshmen to Three Novels

RESPONSES OF COLLEGE FRESHMEN TO THREE NOVELS

A comparison of students' written responses before and after study of three novels: *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger, *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck, and *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway.

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NCTE Research Report No. 7

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explores the complex area of student responses to literature. As one reads this provocative study, he continually finds himself stimulated by the problems which arise when investigating the area and challenged to extend and refine the research. No doubt this is one of the reasons why the Committee on Research (while under the chairmanship of Dwight Burton) decided that the Wilson report should be published—to act as a catalyst to further research into student responses to literature.

A number of problems for further research immediately present themselves:

Professor Wilson's study is based on analysis of student responses according to the seven categories established in the Squire report (NCTE Research Report No. 2—also originally a Ph.D. dissertation accomplished at the University of California at Berkeley). Although the sample responses which Professor Wilson generously offers throughout the report usually seem to be categorized clearly, one is continually concerned by the idea that some responses can be placed in either of several categories. As Professor Wilson puts it, "Coding a response as interpretational or as literary judgment was far from defining its shape. Perhaps the essence of response was indescribable and undefinable. . . ." One is tempted to explore whether or not different investigators would categorize the responses differently enough to obtain different results.

The report notes that the students' written comments on the novels they read "were replete with uniquely patterned responses and individual interpretations which differed from those offered by competent critics—that some responses were unsophisticated or evasive, some were fragmentary or partial." One may well investigate whether or not different teaching strategies, different novels, or different types of students would yield different results. We cannot be sure just what such research means until we have some basis for comparison, either through controlled experimentation or through replication of the Wilson study with one of the conditions changed. An essential element of such future research is the kind of detailed report of class discussion which marked the Coryell study.

A final possibility concerns the quality of student responses within a given category. That is, not so much "A" to "F" quality, as in grading, but types of responses within the broader category—"subcategories." Suppose, for example, that an investigator gathered samples of "literary judgment" responses from a range of readers at various levels of maturity and categorized those responses according to types, or steps, or means employed, or esthetic features considered. Would he have categorizations which might reflect the quality of student responses more than the seven broader categories do? Could he arrange some of these subcategories in an ascending order which reflects the development of literary maturity? Could he thus formulate a yardstick by which to measure the effectiveness of various strategies in the teaching of various types of literature to various types of students?

The Wilson study is a daring sortie into an area complex enough to challenge the most perceptive investigators. We need more studies to deepen and extend the insights which Professor Wilson courageously explores.

RICHARD BRADDOCK, *Chairman*
Committee on Research
NCTE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Pages
RESEARCH REPORT NO. 7	v
INTRODUCTION	1
BACKGROUND	3
Opinions of Literary Critics	3
EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN	5
Selection of the Novels	5
Subjects	6
Sequence of Class Procedures	6
Discussions	7
Seven Categories of Responses: the Coding	8
Statistical Methods	10
Choice of Subjects for Individual Analysis	11
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CODING RESULTS	13
INDIVIDUAL ANALYSES: INTENSIVE EXPLORATION OF THE RESPONSES OF NINE SUBJECTS	17
Interpretational Responses: Three Examples	18
Flora: Typical of the Interpretational Trend	18
Wilma: Extreme in the Direction of the Interpretational Trend	19
Sally: Opposite to the Interpretational Trend	21
Literary Judgment Responses: Three Examples	22
Max: Typical of the Literary Judgment Trend	22
Laura: Extreme in the Direction of the Literary Judgment Trend	24
Grace: Opposite to the Literary Judgment Trend	25
Self Involvement: Three Examples	28
Ann: Typical of the Self Involvement Trend	29
Tess: Extreme in the Direction of the Self Involvement Trend	30
Milo: Opposite to the Self Involvement Trend	32
INDIVIDUAL ANALYSES: CONCLUSIONS	35
FINDINGS	37
Literary Interpretation and Self Involvement	37
Adolescents' Difficulties in Interpreting Literature	38
Some Implications for Teaching	40
BIBLIOGRAPHY	42

TABLES

TABLE I: Subjects Chosen for Individual Analysis, Their Distribution among Categories, Novels, and Types of Response.....12

TABLE II: Total Responses to Each Novel in Each Category by Percent.....15

TABLE III: Subjects Chosen for Individual Analysis: Their Percentages Compared with Mean Percentages.....17

INTRODUCTION

Can literature be taught? The question seems foolish—especially to the thousands who teach literature in our schools. Does the study of a novel in the classroom change the ways students respond to it? Again the affirmative answer seems obvious. But if we ask in which ways the responses change or how much the students' responses change, it becomes apparent that we do not know. There is little evidence on any of these fundamental questions because there has been little investigation of what happens when literature is studied. On these questions opinion reigns—because knowledge is lacking.

This monograph reports one of the first investigations of the influence of the classroom on responses to literature. Seven response types were defined. The investigator discovered that college freshmen in English who studied a novel in class changed their patterns of responses to that novel—many of them in unexpected ways.

BACKGROUND

Two areas of research were joined in this investigation: the student response to literature and the influence of the classroom on that response. They would seem to go hand in hand, progress in the study of how students respond to literature invites examination of the influence of the classroom on this response. (See 18, pp. 3-7, for a survey of research.)[1] While a number of significant investigations—from I. A. Richards (13) to James R. Squire (17)—have concerned student response to literature, fundamental questions of whether the study of literature influences the way students respond to it has seldom been investigated.

Opinions of Literary Critics

Possibly the lack of research on the study of literature is a result of discouragement before difficulties: potential investigators may share the opinion of many critics that the response to literature is difficult to define or describe and, consequently, hard to investigate.

There is little agreement among critics of literature as to what the "experience" of literature is. R. P. Blackmur (2, p. 355), for instance, describes it as a "sense of continuous relationship, of sustained contact" with the work. He sees it as rare and exhilarating because "it is the fine object of criticism: as it puts us in direct possession of the principles whereby the works move without injuring or disintegrating the body of the works themselves." Probably not many readers can attain this experience—what Blackmur calls "direct apprehension"—of literature.

Northrop Frye (7, p. 27) puts us in an even worse plight. The original experience, he notes in his *Anatomy of Criticism*, "is like the direct vision of color, or the direct sensation of heat or cold, that physics 'explains' in what, from the point of view of the experience itself, is a quite irrelevant way. However disciplined by taste and skill, the experience of literature is, like literature itself, unable to speak." Frye argues that every act is unique in the essential experience of literature and that classification is therefore impossible.

René Wellek and Austin Warren (20, pp. 90-91, 135) state in their

[1] Reference numbers in parentheses refer to numbered items in the Bibliography, beginning on page 43. Page numbers in parentheses refer to pages in the work cited.

Theory of Literature that if we attempt to focus on the reader's response to literature, we are led "finally to the admission that . . . the supposed pattern in our mind is not definitely related to the poem which caused it."

> We can hypothesize—plausibly, no doubt—that the young are more directly and powerfully influenced by their reading than the old, that inexperienced readers take literature more naively as transcript rather than interpretation of life, that those whose books are few take them in more utter seriousness than do wide and professional readers. Can we advance beyond such conjecture?

Wellek and Warren imply doubts about the value of objective study of the response to literature. Furthermore, they exclude it from literary study: "The psychology of the reader, however interesting in itself or useful for pedagogical purposes, will always remain outside the object of literary study. . . ."

Yet one of the oldest and most famous terms in literary studies—Aristotle's *katharsis*—is generally considered to be a theory concerned with the response to literature. Aristotle himself does not define the word, and scholars differ as to its meaning in the context of the *Poetics*. William K. Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks (21, pp. 36-37) present the two most popular (and opposing) interpretations of catharsis: (1) a medical metaphor implying the purgation and expulsion of pity and terror or (2) a religious or moral metaphor implying the purification of these usually selfish emotions. But they exclude both of these meanings from literary criticism, for:

> both views concern after all not what tragedy says or what tragedy is so much as what tragedy may do to us: they lie rather in the realm of experimental psychology than in that of literary criticism. They treat "pity and fear" as a reference to something in the audience. . . .

The present report, then, returns to an older tradition, difficult and problematical as it may be—to an investigation of this "something in the audience," this "apprehension of the work" (15, p. 15).

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

Selection of the Novels

Three well-known American novels were chosen for this investigation: *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger (14), *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck (19), and *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway (8).

Preliminary studies by the investigator established that college students often respond vividly and differentially to these novels. For instance, one student, a tall motorcyclist in his early twenties who had driven trucks cross-country since the age of sixteen, wrote of Salinger's novel:

> I am supposed to write about the different parts in the book that interest me. But, since the book has left me with only a feeling of nausea, my personal opinion is that the person responsible for this farce, the author, must be one of two persons: a person whose inner self comes out when he sits down at a typewriter and goes wild with words. Then finishing, he leaves to become a peaceful and civil person. Or he is a rotten and corrupt individual who is so filled with this type of filth that he had to pour it somewhere. The only pitiful part is that he put it into a book instead of a garbage can.

Yet, the same novel was capable of evoking strong identification in both men and women. A young woman commented: "It was absolutely impossible not to project myself into his life. I, and I think almost everyone who's read the book, felt what he felt with painful intensity. There is a definite identification with the boy." An older woman, who had been psychoanalyzed for three years—unsuccessfully, she said—and who showed penetration and facility in her response to literature, went a step further:

> To me this is an extremely perplexing novel. Although Salinger purports to describe the gradual mental breakdown of an extremely neurotic youth and his eventual arrival at the analyst's couch, most of the time the boy seems more "normal" than the people around him. At least he is more *human*, more discerning and more alive. I don't know if Salinger was trying to give this impression or not, but to a certain extent it was the environment which came up for indictment in this story more than the parents, or the boy's thinking processes, or any other factor.

Equally varied responses were made to the other novels chosen for this investigation.

But these novels were not simply machines which—automatically and predictably—stimulated responses; obviously, they were written neither for studies of the response to reading nor for an audience of college freshmen. Each novel presented barriers and difficulties to the readers investigated. *The Catcher in the Rye* with its perfect mimesis of a young man talking and its powerful, epithetic style disturbed some of the students in the study. *The Grapes of Wrath* annoyed others with its biological analogies, its philosophical interludes, its matriarchal family clan, and its conversations in dialect. *A Farewell to Arms* bored some readers with its objective, implicit, paratactical prose style; other readers were shocked by its clear delineation of sex in an illicit relationship. Yet study of these novels was fruitful. Discussion led to communication of difficulties, to scrutiny of the text, to revaluations. The novels sustained all approaches; they maintained their integrity as works of art—as valid examples of what De Quincey (3) called the *Literature of Power* because of its power to excite human passions.

Subjects

The fifty-four subjects were members of two freshman English classes at San Francisco State College. Their entrance examination results showed that they were a typical scholastic sampling: During the year of the investigation about half of all entering freshman students at the college fell below (and half above) the fortieth percentile of the verbal section of the School and College Ability Test. Twenty-six of the subjects were above the fortieth percentile, and twenty-seven were below. One subject's scores were not available.

Sequence of Class Procedures

The semester course was organized under three heads: the self, parents and children, and men-women relations. Following introductory assignments, *The Catcher in the Rye* was studied during the portion of the course covering the self:

Sixth session of class: *The Catcher in the Rye*
40 minutes: free written response to the novel
35 minutes: discussion of the novel
Seventh session of class: student panel discussion of

"*The Catcher in the Rye* and the Self"
75 minutes
Eighth session of class:
35 minutes: discussion of the novel
40 minutes: free written response to the novel

The Grapes of Wrath was studied during the portion of the course covering psychological weaning from the family. The sequence of class procedures was as follows:

Twelfth session of class: *The Grapes of Wrath*
40 minutes: free written response to the novel
35 minutes: discussion of the novel
Thirteenth session of class: Student panel discussion of
"*The Grapes of Wrath* and Parents and Children"
75 minutes
Fourteenth session of class:
35 minutes: discussion of the novel
40 minutes: free written response to the novel

A Farewell to Arms was studied during the portion of the course covering men-women relationships. The sequence of class procedures was as follows:

Eighteenth session of class: *A Farewell to Arms*
40 minutes: free written response to the novel
35 minutes: discussion of the novel
Nineteenth session of class: student panel discussion of
"*A Farewell to Arms* and Men-Women Relationships"
75 minutes
Twentieth session of class:
35 minutes: discussion of the novel
40 minutes: free written response to the novel

Discussions

This investigation compared student responses before and after study of three novels. *Study* was operationally defined as all the factors affecting the second response differentially from the first response. This study included participation in class discussions led by the instructor (seventy minutes) and led by student panels (seventy-five minutes). While there was no set structure to the discussions, typically they (1) began with responses, usually accepted without comment, from a wide range of students, (2) were followed by inten-

sive examination of those aspects of the novel which had produced sharp disagreement, and (3) concluded with integrating views of the novel.

Scrutiny of the novel with specific references to the text and citations (read orally by the student) was encouraged. Discussion led to a full exploration of the grounds for differing perceptions of the novel rather than to the resolution of differences. The assumption was that any statement reflecting an individual perception of the novel was worth consideration. No attempt was made to arrive at interpretational consensus; the instructor encouraged as full a play of response as possible.

The objective of the discussions was to stimulate the student to create his own insights and discriminations, to release him from passive absorption in the instructor's flow of ideas. The method the instructor used implied an aspiration: "Good teachers, even of theoretical science, or of the arts of word and concept, teach by example: they reveal directly to the student the peculiar focus of psychic being, the kind of concentration, which their discipline requires." (6, p. 252).

Seven Categories of Responses: the Coding

The free written reactions to each novel were called the protocols. Differences between the protocols written before class discussions and those written after were central data in this investigation. To objectify these differences, the protocols were first broken into "responses," defined operationally as the smallest unit which seemed to convey a single idea. A content analysis of these responses was made possible by coding them into seven categories, taken from Squire (17), who developed them on the basis of earlier studies of content analysis by Bernard Berelson (1), the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan (11), and analysis of the responses of his own subjects. Definitions of the seven categories follow; examples are responses of subjects in this investigation.

Literary Judgment (Category 1)

Responses coded into this category were those concerned with the author and his method, plot mechanisms, adequacy of characterization, language, style, and general evaluations of literary worth.

> The writing really moved me. I can't get over the fact that when Mr. Steinbeck described something he described it in

> such a way that you could actually see what was going on. I suppose he did this by continuous repetition of a characteristic like "the rain fell like someone had the faucet on full-blast." He would repeat this detail three or four times within the same paragraph. He wrote the story very vividly.

Interpretational (Category 2)

These were reactions in which the reader generalized and attempted to discover the meaning of the story, the motivational forces, the nature of the characters.

> Holden loved Pency very much, and he realized it was his own fault for being dismissed. His sad feelings about leaving were deeper than he realized, as stated by Holden upon leaving the school for the last time, "I felt like crying." Yet, to cover up his deeper feelings, he immediately yelled, "Sleep tight, ya morons!" to assure himself that having to leave didn't faze him one way or the other.

Narrational (Category 3)

Responses in which the reader repeated the words, details, or incidents in a story without attempting to interpret or generalize were coded here. This factual retelling frequently seemed to occur when the reader experienced difficulty in comprehension.

> Tom asks Muley where his family is, and Muley says they are with some relatives in town. Muley has some rabbits with him, so they skin them, cook them, and eat them. After they meet, but before they have eaten, or even started to fix the food, the sheriff comes, and Muley tells Tom and Casy to hide. They do hide.

Associational (Category 4)

These were responses in which the reader associated characters, ideas, events, or places in the story with those of his own experience, real or vicarious. However, responses associating a character directly with the reader himself were coded into Category 5.

> He is very much like the teenagers we see around in high school. In fact, in the first few chapters of the book, I couldn't help but compare him to two or three of the boys in my high school class.

Self Involvement (Category 5)

Responses in which the reader associated himself with the be-

havior or emotional reactions of a character were coded here. Such association took the form either of 5A, identification:

> I found myself talking to myself the way they did. I even began thinking their way.

or 5B, rejection:

> Catherine did not appeal to me. I found her shallow and dull and oversexed. There was something offensive about her dainty harlotry. Not because it was harlotry, but because it was dainty. All that claptrap about not needing the formality of marriage—because they were in reality husband and wife already!

Prescriptive (Category 6)

Responses in which the reader prescribed a certain course of behavior for a character were coded here when such prescription seemed to be based on absolute standards. Such statements, which may be identified by the use of the terms "should," "ought," or "must," seemed to indicate the reader's belief that the character was obliged to act within a fixed and rigid response pattern.

> If we do love God then we could not possibly live with a secular love that was against the laws of God—namely, adultery. Their love was illicit and immoral under God's judgment, regardless of the war. I'm sure God would not be swayed by the sentimentality aroused by war, as are the people we live with. If anything, God would most want us to be stronger during war.

Miscellaneous (Category 7)

Responses which could not be coded in other categories were included here. The few responses coded into this category were digressions unrelated to the story.

> I have had it pretty easy. I am the son of a not-too-happily married couple, and I am the only child. Things haven't been too rough for me. I may be considered spoiled, but I am not. I'm about average.

Statistical Methods

A total of 20,194 responses were coded into the seven categories described above. Statistical analysis, however, was based on 18,878 of these units, those from subjects writing protocols both before and after class discussions. The subjects who failed to write protocols both

before and after discussion of a particular novel were excluded from the analysis of the results for that novel. Forty-nine of the subjects wrote both "before" and "after" protocols for *The Catcher in the Rye*—a total of 6,861 units. Forty-three of the subjects wrote both protocols for *The Grapes of Wrath*—a total of 6,007 units. Forty-eight of the subjects wrote both protocols for *A Farewell to Arms*—a total of 6,008 units.

Because the "before" and "after" groups of students for each book were identical, it was unnecessary to correlate the scores of each pair of groups, thus making possible the use of the Difference Method of statistical analysis (5, p. 138-140). This parametric method was used for categories 1 (literary judgment) and 2 (interpretational), where responses were heavy and continuous. However, parametric methods were invalid for categories 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, where responses were fewer and sparser. Therefore, the investigator used the Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Test (16, p. 75, 85), a nonparametric method providing for discontinuity and asymmetrical distribution in matched pairs of observations. All tests were two-tailed.*

Choice of Subjects for Individual Analysis

The statistical analysis constituted a quantitative examination. The investigator thought that a qualitative analysis might help explain some of the statistical results—give background for them. Such a large number of data was not conducive to the kind of intensive qualitative probe which was thought to have most potential. Therefore several subjects were isolated as examples of the (1) most typical responses, (2) the most atypical responses, and (3) responses which followed the same direction as the typical but carried it to an extreme.

The responses of nine subjects were chosen for individual analysis on the basis of coding results in the three categories. These categories —the three with the highest mean totals for all novels—were interpretational (65.6 percent), literary judgment (12.2 percent), and self involvement (8.9 percent). Together they included 86.7 percent of all responses. In each of these categories subjects were chosen as examples whose responses were (1) *typical* of the mean trend for all subjects, (2) *extreme* in the direction of the mean trend, and (3) extreme in the *opposite* direction from the mean trend. Each novel was represented

*Describes tests for the statistical significance when it is assumed that the difference may be in either direction.

by three examples: one typical, one extreme, and one opposite trend. Trend was defined as the change in response (in any given category) made by most students—the statistical "mode."

TABLE 1

Subjects Chosen for Individual Analysis, Their Distribution Among Categories, Novels, and Types of Response

	The Catcher in the Rye	*The Grapes of Wrath*	*A Farewell to Arms*
Typical[1]	Flora (Category 2)	Ann (Category 5)	Max (Category 1)
Extreme[2]	Laura (Category 1)	Wilma (Category 2)	Tess (Category 5)
Opposite[3]	Milo (Category 5)	Grace (Category 1)	Sally (Category 2)

[1] Typical of the mean trend for this novel in this coding category.
[2] Extreme in the direction of the mean trend for this novel in this coding category.
[3] Extreme in the opposite direction from the mean trend for this novel in this coding category.

This method of selection assured representation of the three categories, the three novels, and the three trends. Distribution of the chosen subjects (fictitious names) is shown in Table 1. Subjects chosen as typical or atypical for one category did not follow the same trend in all other categories.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CODING RESULTS

Each student protocol was broken into separate responses (coding units) which were classified into one of seven categories. Thus, for each student it could be determined how many responses existed in each of his set protocols (before and after each novel) and the number and percentage of them which fell into each category. Group percentages (cited below) are means taken from the individual scores. These are total means for all three novels together, showing the general trend, unless they are stated as being for an individual novel.

Literary judgment responses decreased from a mean of 17.0 percent before study to a mean of 7.0 percent after study. (That is to say, for the group of subjects as a whole, 17 percent of responses on prestudy protocols were classified as literary judgment, but the number of literary judgment responses on protocols written after study decreased to only 7 percent of total responses.) The differences for each novel were statistically significant at the 1 percent level or better. This change was the expected one since the liveliest and most challenging portions of the class discussions of the novels centered on points of interpretation rather than literary evaluation. This trend was probably reinforced by the instructor's refusal to make literary judgments, to supply "correct" interpretations, or to resolve disputes in interpretation. Hence, the particular conduct of discussions partly determined the nature of the changes.

Interpretational responses increased from a mean of 54.5 percent before study to a mean of 78.4 percent after study. The change in response to *The Catcher in the Rye*, however, was not statistically significant. This change was a source of surprise to the investigator. Possibly the magnitude of the "before" interpretational responses, 64.0, left less room for upward change. It should be noted that the percentage of "after" responses for this novel in this category was the highest of the three novels. The differences for the other two novels were significant at the 1 percent level or better.

Narrational responses decreased from a mean of 13.0 percent before a study to a mean of 3.6 percent after study. The differences were significant for each novel at the 5 percent level or better. Narrational responses were (excepting 7, miscellaneous) perhaps the most naive. They constituted a kind of "easy out," an evasion of the difficulties of interpretation or of judgment. The decrease in narrational responses

following study of the novels indicated a change to more analytical responses.

Associational responses decreased from a mean of 2.8 percent before study to a mean of 1.3 percent after study. The differences were significant for each novel at the 5 percent level or better. Many responses in category 4 were rather obvious associations with family and friends. Some, however, showed more breadth, associating with individuals or groups beyond the immediate circle.

Self involvement responses—5A, identification, and 5B, rejection, were not separated for statistical purposes—decreased from a mean of 10.5 percent before study to a mean of 7.0 percent after study. The difference was not significant for *A Farewell to Arms;* the differences for the other two novels were significant at the 3 percent level or better. (Doubt was cast on these results by the exploration of individual responses. See Individual Analyses: Conclusions.)

Prescriptive responses decreased from a mean of 1.4 percent before study to a mean of 1.1 percent after study. Differences were not significant except for *The Catcher in the Rye,* for which differences were significant at the 5 percent level. The highest percentage of prescriptive responses occurred for this novel; possibly the subjects felt that they knew Holden Caulfield well enough to judge him harshly. (He is near their own age; his milieu is much closer to theirs than those of *The Grapes of Wrath* and *A Farewell to Arms.*)

Differences in miscellaneous responses- a mean of 0.8 percent before study and a mean of 1.6 percent after study—were not significant. Responses in this category were fewer than for any other category; possibly this small number indicated that the first six coding categories covered the spectrum of student responses adequately.

Table II contains the total responses to each novel in each category by percentage. Most responses were coded as interpretational (65.6 percent), followed in order of frequency by literary judgment (12.2 percent), self involvement (8.9 percent), narrational (8.7 percent), associational (2.1 percent), prescriptive (1.3 percent), and miscellaneous (1.2 percent).

TABLE II

Total Responses to Each Novel in Each Category by Percent

Category		*Catcher in the Rye*	*Grapes of Wrath*	*Farewell to Arms*	*Mean*
1. Literary Judgment	Before	10.7	14.5	25.8	17.0
	After	6.2	7.6	7.1	7.0
	Total	8.7	11.4	16.6	12.2
2. Interpretational	Before	64.0	48.0	51.4	54.5
	After	80.3	77.8	77.1	78.4
	Total	71.1	61.5	64.1	65.6
3. Narrational	Before	10.1	18.1	10.9	13.0
	After	2.9	3.0	5.0	3.6
	Total	7.0	11.3	8.0	8.7
4. Associational	Before	2.3	4.1	1.8	2.8
	After	0.8	2.1	0.9	1.3
	Total	1.6	3.2	1.4	2.1
5. Self Involvement	Before	10.5	13.7	7.2	10.5
	After	7.4	7.9	5.6	7.0
	Total	9.2	11.1	6.4	8.9
6. Prescriptive	Before	2.1	1.3	.9	1.4
	After	1.5	0.4	1.4	1.1
	Total	1.8	0.9	1.1	1.3
7. Miscellaneous	Before	0.3	0.3	1.9	0.8
	After	0.8	1.1	2.9	1.6
	Total	0.5	0.7	2.4	1.2

INDIVIDUAL ANALYSES: INTENSIVE EXPLORATION OF THE RESPONSES OF NINE SUBJECTS

Because it was sometimes more convenient and efficient to discuss protocols out of the order in which they were written, it may be worth repeating the original sequence of the protocols. The first two protocols were written before and after study of *The Catcher in the Rye;* the second two protocols were written before and after study of *The Grapes of Wrath;* the last two protocols were written before and after study of *A Farewell to Arms.* All subjects in this investigation wrote their protocols in the above sequence. The 54 protocols on which this section is based were selected from the 280 protocols which were coded. The discussion of subjects follows the order of Table III.

TABLE III
Subjects Chosen for Individual Analysis:
Their Percentages Compared with Mean Percentages

Category	*Subject*	*Subject's Percentages Before to After*	*Mean Percentages Before to After*	*Novel*
Interpre-tational (Category 2)	Typical: Flora[1]	62.2 to 77.2	64.0 to 80.3	*The Catcher in the Rye*
	Extreme: Wilma[2]	13.6 to 91.2	48.0 to 77.8	*The Grapes of Wrath*
	Opposite: Sally[3]	69.6 to 0	51.4 to 77.1	*A Farewell to Arms*
Literary Judgment (Category 1)	Typical: Max[1]	17.1 to 5.7	25.8 to 7.1	*A Farewell to Arms*
	Extreme: Laura[2]	53.3 to 0	10.7 to 6.2	*The Catcher in the Rye*
	Opposite: Grace[3]	5.7 to 22.7	14.5 to 7.6	*The Grapes of Wrath*
Self Involvement (Category 5)	Typical: Ann[1]	13.0 to 3.2	13.7 to 7.9	*The Grapes of Wrath*
	Extreme: Tess[2]	23.3 to 1.2	7.2 to 5.6	*A Farewell to Arms*
	Opposite: Milo[3]	13.3 to 31.7	10.5 to 7.4	*The Catcher in the Rye*

[1] Chosen as an example typical of the mean trend for this novel in this coding category.

[2] Chosen as an example of an extreme in the direction of the mean trend for this novel in this coding category.

[3] Chosen as an example of an extreme in the opposite direction from the mean trend for this novel in this coding category.

Interpretational Responses: Three Examples

Sixty-five percent of the 18,876 responses coded in this investigation were interpretational (category 2); this percentage was by far the highest for any coding category. The novel which had the highest percentage in this most frequent category was *The Catcher in the Rye* with 71.1.

Flora: Typical of the Interpretational Trend

Flora was chosen for qualitative analysis because the percentages of her interpretational responses to *The Catcher in the Rye* were *typical* of the mean trend for this novel in this coding category. They were 62.2 before class discussion and 77.2 after. These percentages were near the means of 64.0 and 80.3. She began her first paper on the novel:

> I closed *Catcher in the Rye* with mixed feelings. At one moment I felt that Holden was mature, but soon I felt he was impossibly young. The book captured just how I feel about many people I have met, only I do not express myself in the same language.

The "mixed feelings" were reflected by the self involvement (category 5) responses. The responses were higher (28.0 percent) than the mean (10.5 percent), but they were ambivalent. The identification (category 5A, self involvement, identification) was strong enough to cause Flora to think of Holden as real:

> Holden likes to make believe. His actions remind me of Walter Mitty. I never dreamed that anyone in real life had hallucinations such as those had by Mitty. But here was Holden, a real character to me, pretending to be shot in the stomach.

Holden said what Flora wanted to say (category 5A):

> They irritated me just about as much as they did Holden. This is what makes the book interesting—Holden comes out and says things that I wouldn't dare to say. Maybe I quietly discuss them, but I never get such gripes completely out of my system.

But over a third of Flora's self involvement responses were rejections of Holden (category 5B, self involvement, rejection): "This is shocking to me as I have been raised with the idea of 'respect your elders.' . . . After reading his views on Jesus and his disciples I was shocked."

There was a qualitative change in the protocol written by Flora following the class discussion of *The Catcher in the Rye*. She began "thoroughly confused," but the entire protocol was an earnest and organized attempt at analysis of the novel:

> Now that I'm thoroughly confused, it is difficult to sort out all the ideas I have accumulated from others and on my own. I feel that Holden had a bad outlook on life (referring to page 190).

The reference to page 190 was followed by an interpretation of the passage cited. Two other pages were also cited and analyzed.

The 5.3 percent of self involvement (category 5) responses in the protocol written after class discussion were all category 5B, rejection; the warm identification with Holden expressed in some of the responses of the "before" protocol had dissipated. Not only were none of the responses in the "after" protocol coded identification (category 5A)—10.5 percent of the responses were actually prescriptive (category 6). She even questioned the possibility of his existence: "Holden is also abnormal in that he has such a negative attitude. . . . Are there people actually like this?"

Flora's rejection was so total as to include statements the meaning of which she had not yet determined!

> The last sentences still puzzle me. They seem to be opposed to my own ideas, but I cannot exactly determine what *bad* principle Holden is trying to set up. He seems to say, "Don't ever tell your troubles to anybody; don't ever ask their advice, because they will only confuse or mislead you." Of course on this point I feel exactly the opposite.

Flora, following class discussion of the novel, was more interpretive, less self involved, and more prescriptive. Her analysis was more intensive—with specific passages located and interpreted—and more complex. But her attitude toward Holden had become simpler. Her earlier ambivalence had coalesced into rejection.

Both in these protocols and in those which Flora wrote in response to the other novels, there was a congruence between coding results and the individual analysis.

Wilma: Extreme in the Direction of the Interpretational Trend

Wilma was chosen as an example of an *extreme* in the direction of the mean trend for *The Grapes of Wrath* in interpretational (category

2). Her percentages increased from 13.6 to 91.2. The total group mean for this category and this novel increased from 48.0 percent to 77.8 percent. Her scores in literary judgment (category 1) for the same novel also showed an extreme movement in the direction of the mean. Her percentages decreased from 70.5 percent "before" to 8.8 percent "after." The mean for category 1 decreased from 14.5 percent to 7.6 percent. Wilma's scores for self involvement in *The Grapes of Wrath* were also interesting. She moved—again in the direction of the trend—from near the mean "before" to zero "after." Thus in the three categories with the highest percentages of responses for all subjects (categories 2, 1, and 5), Wilma followed the trend to an extreme degree.

Although these coding results indicated a sriking change, not much qualitative change was found. Wilma was noncommittal and abstract before class discussion of *The Grapes of Wrath*:

> This isn't a book I can put down to pick up later and continue easily as I could *Catcher in the Rye*. Each time I start to read, I must again become interested, reformulate my ideas, and again fit myself into the story. It's not because this isn't a good story, but it is just not my idea of a good book, one that holds interest. Before attempting to read this book, I had built up in my mind a great story, one that would hold the reader completely until the last page; I was disappointed.

Obviously, Wilma was not very involved in the novel. She was cautious, conventional, and superficial. Of this protocol, 70.5 percent was coded as literary judgment; Wilma used literary judgment (as in the above quotation) as a noncommittal or even evasive tactic.

She continued to be abstract and noncommittal following the discussion of the novel.

> The family as a whole was a very typical family. They were close, yet independent of one another. They lived, fought, and struggled together. They all had a lot of hope for reaching California, and their basic ideas were very real. The things that other people felt were wrong, they didn't consider wrong. Because of the environment in which they grew up, things of that type were accepted.

Finally Wilma's coding results indicated a dramatic change—but exploration of her individual responses did not support such a striking change. Her interpretational responses increased, her self involvement responses decreased—but these responses had been superficial and noncommittal originally, and did not change their quality after study.

Sally: Opposite to the Interpretational Trend

Sally was chosen as an example of an extreme in the *opposite* direction from the mean trend for *A Farewell to Arms* in interpretational (category 2). Her percentages moved from 69.6 "before" to zero "after"; the mean moved from 51.4 "before" to 77.1 "after."

Sally's interpretational responses (category 2) were very similar to her narrational responses (category 3) for *A Farewell to Arms*. Here is an example of her interpretational responses before the discussion:

> I think he killed himself because his Catherine was gone, with his love, forever. They had fun in Switzerland, where they both showed their love. At first she seemed to be a little stupid, letting him take advantage, but she wasn't sorry. When he was leaving and they stayed together, she felt first like a prostitute, but he showed that he loved her.

All of Sally's responses following class discussion of *A Farewell to Arms* were coded narrational (category 3). Sally seemed to be completely inside the experience:

> Here we are, Henry, finally being together for always. No, I don't want to get married, because the people of the hospital will throw me out. But why not? I've got to marry you. No, Henry, no. Please don't ask me. Sometimes I feel like a paid prostitute, but our undying love for each other washes away this feeling of guilt. I do love you, Henry. Sometimes I think of my old lover, and I see his likeness in you. I wonder if he and I would have had such a wonderful, wholesome relationship. Yes, I do love you. Why are you looking at me with that strange expression? Do I remind you of someone, too? I wonder if there are other people in this world as happy and complete as we are. I hear noises . . .

And so on for several more pages.

Why did Sally's coding results move opposite to the trend for *A Farewell to Arms* only? Why was Sally's interpretational percentage high before discussion while her narrational percentage was high after discussion? We can theorize that Sally, like many of the naive readers among the subjects, had difficulty in penetrating *A Farewell to Arms*. She interpreted in a very simple and tentative fashion because she could not fully understand. Once class discussion had supplied her with the security of understanding, she relaxed into that total and rather inchoate recreation of the story which can only be coded as

narrational (category 3). Any self involvement—identification or, for that matter, passionate rejection—was as effectually masked to qualitative analysis as it was to statistical analysis. Almost none of Sally's responses were coded as self involvement.

In summary, Sally's coding results were accepted as valid. But the qualitative difference between narrational responses and interpretational responses was very small in her protocols. Nearly all of her interpretations were extremely simple and naive, and at their most complex they reproduced and interpreted the story metaphorically. Whether Sally moved with the trend or opposite to the trend of coding results, her responses remained similarly direct and unsophisticated.

Literary Judgment Responses: Three Examples

Twelve percent of the responses coded in this investigation were literary judgment; this percentage was the second highest for the coding categories. The percentage of literary judgment responses to *A Farewell to Arms* was 16.6; this percentage was the highest of the three novels.

Max: Typical of the Literary Judgment Trend

Max was chosen for qualitative analysis because his percentages of literary judgment (category 1) responses to *A Farewell to Arms* were typical. They moved from 17.1 percent down to 5.7 percent. The total-group mean on this novel for literary judgment moved in a similar fashion from 25.8 percent down to 7.1 percent. But the percentages of Max's literary judgment responses for the other two novels were not typical. His percentages of category 1 responses to *The Catcher in the Rye* were far below the mean, and he gave no category 1 responses to *The Grapes of Wrath*. Thus the percentages of his literary judgment responses were typical only for *A Farewell to Arms*, the third novel studied.

There were large divergences from the mean in several of the other coding categories. In the protocol written after class discussion of *The Catcher in the Rye*, nearly all of the units (98.0 percent) were coded interpretational. The level of insight was low:

> Well, here I am again. It's hard to tell what my reaction is. I think Holden should be left alone to "wise up" for himself. He is a big baby, and that's all there is to it. If he had had a few spankings when he was younger, it might have helped him a bit

> when he grew up. He was let roam aimlessly around doing what he pretty much wanted to do. People have to have some discipline in their lives. Holden had no responsibility; he had too much money. I feel that he is normal to some extent.

All of his "before" responses to *The Grapes of Wrath* were narrational (category 3).

> Tom and Casy see someone coming in the distance. He gets closer and closer. Tom recognizes him as a friend of the family named Muley. Tom and Casy ask him what has happened, and Muley tells them about the bank and about the people having to move and all.

Some of the protocols contained very high percentages of miscellaneous (category 7) units.

> Well, I thought I could write forever. Is this story telling the uselessness of war? Have done with arms. Stop fighting, we'll all die anyway. I can't write anymore, I wish you would call time. You look as if you might, but I guess not. I say let's have a farewell to pencils. It looks as though I may start a third page. I have read one other book of Hemingway's. It was *The Old Man and the Sea*. I enjoyed it very much.

The percentages of self involvement responses (category 5) on the first two novels read were near or below the means, yet on the last novel they were about three times the means.

These puzzling and seemingly unrelated scores became meaningful when a qualitative analysis was made of the subject's responses. Max seems embarrassed by his failure to generate fresh, relevant interpretations; many of his responses were evasive, immature, or irrelevant. But the high percentages (21.4 before and 19.5 after) of self involvement (category 5) responses to *A Farewell to Arms* signaled a break in the pattern of self-conscious inadequacy, perhaps because the subject had experienced the situation described in the novel:

> This book can't mean anything to me, but it does. I have had a similar experience, one with not quite as bad an ending, but quite similar. If I can, I hope to use my experience for my term paper. This book was in some ways senseless and in others very touching.

He identified with the characters:

> *A Farewell to Arms* touches me very deeply. I have put myself

> in the place of Mr. Henry. I have felt what he was feeling; I was loving Catherine when he was loving Catherine. This book is a strange book, a very strange book. I have read it and felt very depressed. Why do we have to read such depressing books? I have enjoyed them in a sort of morbid way.

And he interpreted their actions adequately:

> Here is a man and woman who aren't really in love, but, after a while they grow in love. They aren't married, but what is marriage if there is no love? I guess you could say they were married. Yes, they were married.

Unlike some subjects—Wilma, for instance—who responded with superficial literary judgments when at a loss, it was precisely when Max was most adequate in his interpretations, most involved, that his literary judgments increased. (After the involvement shown in the first three sentences following, note the confused literary judgment of the last two sentences.)

> So I say, who are we to judge these people? I know from my own experience that I couldn't. I would not like to be a judge of these two people. I have read the book; I enjoyed the book. I may not have understood its meaning, but I enjoyed the reading very much.

Max's literary judgment percentages for *A Farewell to Arms*—similar though they were to the means—may be called a personal though extremely limited achievement. With them Max achieved the typical.

Laura: Extreme in the Direction of the Literary Judgment Trend

Laura was chosen as an example of an *extreme* in the direction of the mean trend for literary judgment (category 1) for *The Catcher in the Rye*. Her "before" protocol for this novel was 53.3 percent literary judgment; her "after" protocol was zero percent literary judgment. The mean of this novel for literary judgment was 10.7 percent before and 6.2 after.

Laura's first protocol was surprising: it consisted of two lists, one headed *Holden*, and a second, here quoted from, headed *Book*:

> 1. I enjoyed it.
> 2. It was odd to hear and read about a sixteen year old boy in such a struggle with himself.
> 3. Characterization was very realistic.

4. "Morons" were not defined very well.
5. I liked the way it was written, and the grammar was not too bad.
6. The author made the characters very interesting; the book was simple and direct to the point.

These items were coded as literary judgments.

The protocol written after the discussion of the same novel contained no literary judgments; 100 percent of the responses were interpretational (category 2). Prose had replaced classified and numbered lists:

> I have such a different opinion now of the book *Catcher in the Rye*. The facts discussed in class amazed me. I had not thought of many of the ideas told by the other students. For instance, my interpretation of the title was that he wanted to be the guiding person in the lives of future children. But that was all I thought. The class brought it out that Holden was maturing because of his experiences and because he didn't want the future children to lead the kind of life he had led. A student also brought out the idea that maybe Holden was seeing the older people as phonies, and that he himself wanted to stay a child even as he matured in years and probably in mind.

A high percentage of interpretational (category 2) responses was maintained from the "before" to the "after" protocol for *The Grapes of Wrath*—88.5 and 92.4. The percentages of literary judgment responses (3.3 to 1.5), while they followed the mean trend, were both smaller than the mean (14.5 and 7.6). The difference between the percentages of literary judgment on the "before" protocols for the first two novels was thus a dramatic 50 percent. But the drop from 53.3 for *The Catcher in the Rye* to 3.3 for *The Grapes of Wrath* was certainly a result, in part, of the peculiar, and never-again-used technique of listing responses. It was interesting that the list headed *Book* coded almost perfectly as category 1, literary judgment. Thus inadvertently—and uniquely among all the protocols in this investigation—Laura precoded her own responses.

Grace: Opposite to the Literary Judgment Trend

Grace was chosen as an example of an extreme in the *opposite* direction from the mean trend in literary judgment (category 1) for the novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. Her percentage of responses in literary judgment for this novel increased from 5.7 before to 22.7 after; the mean

percentage for the same novel and category decreased from 14.5 before to 7.5 after. Her category 1 responses also moved in the opposite direction from the trend for the first novel, *The Catcher in the Rye*, though the difference from the trend was not so great as for *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Grace's self involvement (category 5) percentages before class discussion were high for these first two novels. Her percentage for *The Grapes of Wrath* was particularly high—48.6 compared to the mean of 13.7. Nearly half of the responses in the "before" protocol were self involvement responses similar to the following:

> When I began reading *The Grapes of Wrath*, I started immediately to enjoy and to live their life with them. Some of the incidents the family went through really made me sick. The one I particularly remember was when they were at the service station and the pet family dog ran out onto the highway and got killed. It really hit home to me, because I too have a little dog that runs out into the street. Mr. Steinbeck really made me feel the sound of the brakes, the crushing bones, and the whimpering of the dying dog.

The simple category 5 responses in this protocol were allied to a high proportion (37.1 percent) of narrational responses (category 3) which reproduced the story:

> Upon arriving in California, they found out it just wasn't so easy to get a job, since so many of their countrymen also had read the handbills. They also found that the land was owned by certain individuals who controlled many millions of acres. So the possibility of owning some land was out, at least for the present.

In context, this retelling of the story (coded as category 3) was almost an extension of category 5 responses. The sentence preceding this section ends: ". . . and build their mother that white house she always wanted." The sentence following this section reads: "Finding a place to live posed another vital problem."

The lower percentages of self involvement on *The Catcher in the Rye* was allied to a high proportion (77.4 percent) of interpretational responses (category 2):

> My impression of Holden Caulfield, as I saw him, was that of a boy alone in the world, even though he had parents. He tried to go out and really tear the world apart, trying to find his goal. He was a spoiled child who eventually got everything he desired. As the story progressed he thought he knew more about everything than anyone else did.

Grace's naive and almost complete self involvement in *The Grapes of Wrath* resulted in nearly all of her responses being coded into either category 5 or category 3. Her reaction to *The Catcher in the Rye* was more aloof; the percentage of interpretational responses was ten times as great as for *The Grapes of Wrath*. The percentages of "before" literary judgment (category 1) responses for these two novels were less than half the mean percentages.

Following class discussion of these two books, Grace's percentages of self involvement fell to near the means; her percentages of literary judgment increased to more than twice the means. A more temperate response resulted in more literary judgments; in the following quotation from the protocol written after class discussion of *The Grapes of Wrath*, the category 1 responses verge on the interpretational:

> The story is a very interesting, realistic story with plain, ordinary Americans portraying the roles. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book, but I was let down in the end. I thought Mr. Steinbeck would have ended it, "and they lived happily ever after." But, as we discussed the book, I realized that the story was written for us to decide and to think about the ending. I especially enjoyed Ma and her influence on the family.

Thus, Grace's movement from 5.7 to 22.7 percent in category 1—which was the basis for her selection for intensive qualitative analysis—was a result of a reduction in emotional involvement. It was a movement toward objectivity.

Grace's responses to *A Farewell to Arms* fell into surprisingly different patterns. Until they were analyzed individually, they seemed to have little relation to the responses to the first two novels. The trend of her responses in category 1, unlike those for the first two novels, was typical of the mean trend. Her percentages of self involvement responses were below the mean. Comparison with the category 5 responses to the previous novel was dramatic: her "before" percentage was 48.6 for *The Grapes of Wrath*, whereas it was 2.1 for *A Farewell to Arms*. But most striking of all, Grace's percentage of miscellaneous responses (category 7) to *A Farewell to Arms* was 40.0 before and 17.0 after.

Grace saw *A Farewell to Arms* as a boring and meaningless war novel:

> Usually when I read a book, I underline different phrases that have some particular meaning to me. But I can truthfully say I didn't underline any line in this book—no meaning.

In the protocol written before class discussion quoted from above there was not a single reference to the love story, not a single reference to the heroine. A long and irrelevant tirade against war filled the miscellaneous category:

> Total destruction! Every day we have threats of war to keep the people on their toes. Tibet made headlines last week. Which country will make headlines this week? If they stopped this war scare . . .

Following the discussion Grace made a few references to the love story, but it was still war, not the novel, that she cared about:

> In the beginning I thought this book was only a war story, but now I believe it was a war story and love story interwoven. It has great meaning to someone who likes that kind of book, but, personally, it didn't move me. I think I could have spent my time doing something more worthwhile. As I said before, having cousins who were in the last war . . .

The warm, simple love for the Joads was gone; Grace judged Frederic Henry severely:

> I think he joined the Italian army because he didn't have too much to do, and it was something to do. It gave him an opportunity to see Italy free with the help of the Army. I do think he displayed courage while fighting on the front. Why didn't he join the American Army? Maybe it was too tough for him. Maybe he was scared.

In summary, love for the family (the Joads), understanding for her peers (Holden Caulfield), inability to accept or even discuss illicit love (Catherine and Frederic)—these were the bases of Grace's responses. Each of her coding scores, however oddly it diverged, had a relation to one of these three areas. But Grace's powerful rejection of illicit love was not directly reflected in either category 5B (self involvement, rejection) or in category 6 (prescriptive).

Self Involvement: Three Examples

Nine percent of the responses coded in this investigation were self involvement; this percentage was the third highest for the coding categories. The percentage of self involvement responses to *The Grapes of Wrath* was 11.1; this percentage was the highest of the three novels.

Ann: Typical of the Self Involvement Trend

Ann was chosen for qualitative analysis because her percentages of self involvement (category 5) were *typical* for the novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. Her percentages for this novel fell from 13.0 percent before class discussion to 3.2 percent after discussion. The mean moved from 13.7 percent to 7.9 percent. (Curiously, Ann had no self involvement responses for the other two novels.) Similarly Ann's responses in literary judgment (category 1) and interpretational (category 2) followed the mean trend.

Ann began the protocol written before class discussion of *The Grapes of Wrath*:

> *The Grapes of Wrath* was very difficult to understand. The real meanings seem hidden beneath the surface.

Ann "felt sorry for these people . . . ," but "Mostly the characters did not impress me too much." However, she was involved enough to write:

> This is still going on in the United States today with Negro labor in the south, Mexican labor in California. It is untair that these people are treated as less than human, as machines to get as much work for as little as possible. It certainly is a blight on the American way of life to have that happen to people here.

Her self involvement was general and social rather than intense and personal:

> This book left me, not depressed, but hurt and sad that this type of thing has to happen to people. On their own land, even though they had droughts and floods, they still had their *own* land and their *own* house and their *own* possessions, no matter how meager or small. After that was taken, they drifted with the wind; the highways were their home. They did not have a place of their own.

Only part of the above quotation was coded self involvement, and these responses barely qualified. Ann preferred the abstract and philosophical passages in *The Grapes of Wrath* to the plot or characterization:

> Steinbeck seemed most effective in the descriptive chapters. They told more of the true story than the action chapters.

The strongest self involvement coded in this protocol was 5B, rejection: "The business men that cheated these people were dirty

louses." Ann summed up the protocol she wrote before class discussion of *The Grapes of Wrath*: "No character in this book evoked sympathy from me. The people as a whole, though, did."

Following class discussion, Ann continued to feel sympathy for the Joads and the "Oakies," but most of her responses were interpretational (category 2)—now, however, concrete and personal:

> Noah was not really weak. He knew in his funny way that he was abnormal and a burden to the family. He saw the pain in Pa's eyes every time Pa looked at him—Pa always blaming himself. Noah found peace on that river bank and felt that he had to stay behind. Also, he knew that his family would protest his leaving, but he knew that he had to go, so he just left.

The few responses coded as self involvement were similar to those coded before class discussion—more social or political than personal:

> These two men and others like them were martyrs, giving of themselves so that their people might have an easier way of life.

Thus there was little qualitative change in Ann's self involvement responses to *The Grapes of Wrath*, and statistically they changed in a typical fashion. There was, however, a discernible qualitative change in Ann's other responses to this novel. Following class discussion, Ann became more personal and concrete. Usually these responses were coded as interpretational (category 2).

Tess: Extreme in the Direction of the Self Involvement Trend

Tess was chosen as an example of an *extreme* in the direction of the mean trend for *A Farewell to Arms* in category 5 (self involvement). Her percentage fell from 23.3 before class discussion to 1.2 after discussion, whereas the mean percentage fell from 7.2 to 5.6.

Over a fourth of Tess's self involvement responses to *A Farewell to Arms* before class discussion were rejections—rejections of both the hero and the heroine: "I didn't like Lt. Henry and/or Miss Barkley."

> I didn't like Miss Barkley for being so stupid as not to want to get married to this Lieutenant Henry when he asked her. I thought she was stupid for not wanting to keep her sense of decency.

Tess identified with the minor characters:

> I did like, however, Rinaldi and the Priest, and Miss Ferguson. I thought all of these people had character and depth. Rinaldi

> was the best character in the book to me, and I loved reading about him. I felt that he was a man to be admired. He was a good friend and a good doctor, and he believed in something, even if it was only himself.
>
> The Priest was also a favorite of mine, because he didn't represent the usual kind of priest who "knows everything." He didn't know all the answers; he blushed when they talked about their girls; and he was a part of the men. He knew their problems and their sins, and tried to help only when he was asked. I liked him very much because he wasn't perfect; he was a man who believed strongly in God—no more and no less. This was my impression of him through the book, and his faith grew stronger at the end of the book.
>
> Miss Ferguson is more like me than anyone in this book. I liked her and do believe that I would have done, said, and acted just the way she did in this book. She was a very good friend to "Cat," although "Cat" didn't deserve one, and she understood their love as much as she could.

Miss Ferguson was an unhappy and moralistic character in the novel; Tess's strong sense of identification with her was congruent with a percentage of prescriptive responses higher than the mean. While only two of the responses in the following quotation were coded prescriptive (category 6), the entire paragraph is moralistic:

> I think he was a coward for not staying in the Army, but I can certainly understand the way he felt. After all, it wasn't *his* war. But I think he would have deserted in an American war too, because he was just tired of war. This is a sign of no character to me, because he just didn't have any regrets about it at all. One thing for sure: they both deserved each other.

Tess ended this protocol by rejecting the credibility of the hero and heroine:

> The whole book was just too much to really believe. I just couldn't believe two people like these actually lived. The only people who were real to me were Rinaldi, the Priest, and Miss Ferguson.

Thus, the high percentage of self involvement was made up of a powerful rejection (5B) of two characters and identification (5A) with three other characters.

Following class discussion of this novel Tess's self involvement responses went down to 1.2 percent. Most of her responses were interpretational, but many of her interpretations were rigid and emphatic, prescriptive in tone:

> I think these two people were just playing a game of love, because I feel that a real love is based on respect for another person's opinion and a basic understanding between two real people . . . I don't think Henry is capable of love . . . Catherine was playing a game, too. She had a very strong guilt complex about her former fiance, and it destroyed her character.

In summary, Tess's self involvement percentage fell from high to low on *A Farewell to Arms*. The rigid moralistic category 5B responses of the "before" protocol became rigid moralistic category 2 responses in the "after" protocol.

Coding results and qualitative analysis both indicated an increase in self involvement from before to after on *The Grapes of Wrath*. The rigid moralistic judgment of the sexual relationship in Hemingway's novel was absent; Tess found it easier to understand murder (she repeated her judgment following class discussion of *The Grapes of Wrath*):

> I liked Tom, too. He had a real strong love for the family, but his temper was too short. He just did what came naturally without thinking about the consequences (e.g., when he killed these two men). I know I would *want* to kill them, too—I wouldn't do it, though.

Milo: Opposite to the Self Involvement Trend

Milo was chosen as an example of an extreme in the *opposite* direction from the self involvement mean (category 5) for *The Catcher in the Rye*. His percentage of self involvement for this novel increased from 13.3 before class discussion to 31.7 after, whereas the mean decreased from 10.5 percent to 7.4 percent. His percentage of self involvement also moved opposite to the trend for the novel *A Farewell to Arms*.

Milo began the protocol written before class discussion of *The Catcher in the Rye*:

> I like Holden. He's alive and tender and terribly mixed-up. He's generous, snotty, superior, and insecure. He loves his sister —and who wouldn't. He must have something to offer, or she wouldn't be so devoted to him. He's a real idol. We all want to be idols, somebody's idol, as much as we want to worship some god.

Many of the responses in this protocol were interpretational:

> Holden has his heart open, and it is getting filled with life. But does he have his mind open? "Better that your heart be broken than turned to stone," according to Oscar Wilde. Well,

> in his life, young as it was, Holden's heart was probably broken, if you can believe him—and I do. No, he is not, and I hope will never be, a scholar who will find "ideas tailored to his mind," as Mr. Antolini implied, because that is to say that some things are not worth considering, that certain thoughts and ideas are too small or too big for you. This is the same as committing yourself, your future self, to a pattern . . .

Though only 13.3 percent of the responses in this protocol were coded self involvement (category 5), an almost total identification with Holden Caulfield was implicit in the responses. The following passage was coded interpretational; but Milo's admiration and empathy were obvious:

> Holden may appear to be a sophisticated know-it-all, but he isn't really. He certainly isn't sophisticated; he's much too receptive. Perhaps he knows more than many people who live to a ripe old age.

In Milo's protocol written after class discussion, a greater percentage (31.7) of responses were coded self involvement; Milo reviewed and relived his own experiences in the light of Holden's:

> Holden moves, Proust-like, backwards a few months and finds experiences and encounters rich and ripe so that he misses them. The other day I rode a merry-go-round in Portsmouth Square. It wasn't a commercial, money-making carousel, but the magical effect of whirling round and round is the same; and if you close your eyes, you can imagine horses cavorting, and if you stop your ears, you can hear music. But it wasn't the same as when I was a child, when the excitement was caused by the fear of falling off.

Qualitative analysis of Milo's protocols for *The Catcher in the Rye* did not indicate an increase of self involvement from before class discussion to after class discussion. A high degree of implicit self involvement was found in both protocols.

INDIVIDUAL ANALYSES: CONCLUSIONS

Exploration of the individual protocols revealed the limitations of the content analysis. For instance, coding a response as interpretational or as literary judgment was far from defining its shape. Perhaps the essence of a response was indescribable and undefinable, like Dylan Thomas' "force that through the green fuse drives the flower." Only the movement, or lack of movement, of involvement, of judgment, of interpretational process could be recorded in the statistical results. And even the unique particulars of the individual protocols—while showing more of the person responding—revealed attitudes and inclinations which were still only possible bases for change. The additional dimension of the individual exploration did, however:

1) illuminate the scope and intensity of feeling in the protocols,
2) exhibit the level of competence and maturity of the responses,
3) capture unique factors which influenced the coding results,
4) make some odd or seemingly unrelated coding results intelligible.

Another factor apparent in the individual protocols was that many responses coded as literary judgment (especially those written before discussion) were conventional and superficial. Some were evasive. The increased efforts at interpretation following study—usually more objective and more analytic than responses in literary judgment—seemed to show a desirable evolution in student approach to literature.

FINDINGS

Individual analyses of student responses showed no striking trend, or change from before study to after study, not already indicated by the coding results. They were generally congruent with the statistical findings. Doubt was cast, however, on some of the self involvement (category 5) scores; *A Farewell to Arms* was cited several times for self involvement responses which were not directly reflected in category 5. Interestingly, the coding results for this novel in self involvement were statistically insignificant.

Except for the inconclusive findings in self involvement, the results of this investigation showed that students' ways of responding to literature were changed—both statistically and individually—by the study of that literature. Statistically, study resulted in fewer literary judgments, more interpretations, less retelling of the story, and fewer self involvement responses. Individually, study resulted not only in the conclusions given in the preceding section, but in some speculations and applications to teaching presented below.

A puzzling negative finding in the misinterpretation of literature is also presented.

Literary Interpretation and Self Involvement

What part does self involvement play in the interpretation of literature? Is there any relationship between interpretational adequacy and self involvement? We know that study reduced scores in self involvement and increased scores in interpretation. But what happened to the *quality* of the interpretations? Were there any relations between the adequacy of interpretational responses and the intensity of self involvement?

Relevant responses of the nine chosen subjects suggested that the relationships were various. Interpretational adequacy *increased* as the intensity of involvement decreased (Flora), but interpretational adequacy also *decreased* as involvement decreased (Wilma). Interpretational adequacy increased while self involvement did not change (Ann and Laura). Neither adequacy nor intensity of involvement changed (Tess). A sudden increase in involvement released more adequate interpretations (Max); but too intense an involvement blocked out interpretations (Sally and Grace). In summary: the rela-

tionships were complex between self involvement and quality of interpretation.

We may speculate, however, that an initial self involvement is necessary for effective interpretational processes. Perhaps most subjects can begin to concern themselves only with questions which have personal importance. That is to say, interpretation may be a secondary predicative process, impossible without the initial self involvement. Squire (18) found that "readers who become extensively involved in stories are also inclined to evaluate the literary qualities of a selection." But he also discovered that these same readers were most analytical when least involved, and less analytical when becoming more involved.

Perhaps self involvement processes tend to be unexamined and unanalyzed, whereas interpretative processes tend to be more sharply formulated, analytic, and more objectively related to the characteristics of the work. (See Loban's investigation of literature and social sensitivity [10] for an illuminating approach to this problem.)

A high degree of interpretational adequacy—such as in the responses of Milo—was rare in the protocols. But when it was found, it seemed to unify rather than to separate the processes of empathy and analysis. Unlike the simpler responses of the other subjects, Milo's interpretations were interfused with, and sustained by, self involvement:

> He (Holden Caulfield) seems to me to intuit a great deal—through peripheral sentiments, to the hot center of what is taking place—not as logically as A-B-C, but with spontaneous empathy. He is basically tender toward the lonely and unloved and socially unaccepted person.

There was a "sense of continuous relationship, of sustained contact" (2, p. 353) in Milo's interpretations.

Adolescents' Difficulties in Interpreting Literature

An unexpected and puzzling finding of this investigation concerned misinterpretations of literature.

I. A. Richards (13) first demonstrated the value of analyzing misinterpretations of literature. Meckel (12), Loban (9), and Squire (17, p. 242) found certain sources of difficulty common among adolescent readers of high school age. Squire found that:

> Six sources of difficulty appear to cause many of the misinterpretations and distortions of these adolescent readers: they fail to grasp the essential meanings in a story because they either misread or make incorrect inferences; they avoid fresh and original interpretations by relying on stock responses; they are "happiness bound" and sometimes give free rein to sentimental emotions in interpreting behavior; they judge stories in terms of superficial critical preconceptions; they are distracted and sometimes bewildered by misleading and irrelevant associations; they are unwilling to withhold judgment and will sometimes express exact explanations of ambiguous behavior even when they have had to supply much of the evidence from their own imaginations.

Very few examples of the sources of difficulty enumerated by Squire were found in the protocols of this investigation. True, the protocols were replete with uniquely patterned responses and individual interpretations which differed from those offered by competent critics—that some responses were unsophisticated or evasive, some were fragmentary or partial. But it would have been difficult to demonstrate that these interpretations were misinterpretations based on misreadings or on stock responses. Some subjects gave rein to sentiment in response to Holden Caulfield or Ma Joad, but it was not indicated that they gave rein to generalized or distorting sentimental emotions. Some subjects seemed to object to a book because they were "Happiness bound"; Tess, for instance, criticized the conclusion of *The Catcher in the Rye*:

> I didn't like the ending because, like everyone else, I am used to books with a happy ending, or books that *end* some way. To me, this book ended on the beginning of his life, if he had one. To my way of thinking, it served only as the introduction to the *real* novel.

But analysis indicated that the judgment of these subjects—and of Tess—was based on more complex grounds than simply that of being "happiness bound." Some subjects objected to Holden Caulfield's language or to the behavior of Frederic and Catherine; these objections did not seem to be caused by superficial critical preconceptions. Max and Grace wrote a large number of misleading and irrelevant associations; whether they were disturbed and bewildered by these associations or whether these irrelevant associations were caused by more fundamental difficulties was examined in the individual analyses of their protocols. Some subjects speculated about the future of Holden Caul-

field or Frederic Henry; these speculations differed from Squire's explanations of "ambiguous behavior" based on evidence from their own imaginations.

The paucity of examples of the six sources of difficulty in interpreting fiction possibly resulted from the increased age and presumably greater sophistication of these subjects compared with those studied by Meckel, Loban, and Squire. (Richards' subjects, while they were of college age, interpreted poetry.) But even obvious misinterpretations caused by vocabulary deficiencies or by failure to finish reading a novel —and these were rarely found—involve complicated issues. On the one hand, what are the boundaries of valid interpretation? Empson, for instance, argues that they are wide (4). On the other hand, is literature a "structure of norms"? Wellek and Warren argue that it is and thereby imply narrow boundaries of valid interpretation (20, p. 138). An instrumental definition of misinterpretation might have bypassed these critical cruxes, but the findings suggested that an analysis of received responses was more useful.

Some Implications for Teaching

1. College students are usually more personally involved in a novel before they try to analyze it: their involvement seems to fade when they get down to serious analysis. Yet this first involvement—identification with, or rejection of, the characters and their actions—seems to catalyze and enrich the analysis which follows. The college instructor should recognize that self involvement of the student in the story is preliminary and stimulating to active exploration; attempts to grasp meaning seem to grow out of this first phase of feeling into.

2. Student statements of personal reaction may be less sharply formulated and logical than their later, considered attempts at interpretation of the novel's meaning; they may be comparatively groping and emotional. If the instructor wishes to encourage individual and honest reactions to literature, he should refrain from demanding that feelings or empathies be fully described or logically argued for.

3. The students in this investigation very seldom misinterpreted (made gross errors in reading) the novels assigned. The college instructor can safely allow his students, in the study of complex works, to range far and freely in their early interpretations without scotching their efforts by declaring them unsound or improbable.

4. This early range and freedom of response will be encouraged if, in assigning new works, the instructor does not overprepare his students—that is, if he does not impose on the students his own interpretation of the work.

5. As the study of the work moves into the period of grappling with real difficulties—of discussion and argument about the interpretation and meaning of the work—the instructor should make increasingly stringent demands: citation of the text, analysis of the citation, and coherent inference on the basis of other relevant passages. In other words, the instructor can expect analysis to be made explicit at this point.

6. The college instructor can expect that the intensive study of literature will not only increase the interpretational facility of his students—it will also result in a concomitant loss of their empathy with the work.

7. The exceptional student may maintain empathy during "sustained contact" (2) with the work, joining personal involvement and analysis. This is rewarding to the instructor and certainly to the student himself, but can hardly be expected of most students. If the typical student can be induced first to involve himself in the work and then to attempt interpretation with discrimination, a real encounter with literature will have taken place.

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SOME RESULTS OF THIS STUDY

Statistical analysis showed that most (65.6%) student responses to the three novels were categorized as interpretational, followed in order of frequency by literary judgment (12.2%), self involvement (8.9%), narrational (8.7%), associational (2.1%), prescriptive (1.3%), and miscellaneous (1.2%). Further, student responses changed after study to increased efforts at interpretation at the expense of nearly all other categories of response, including literary judgment.

Individual analysis showed that responses coded interpretational were usually more analytic and objective than the facile labeling which sometimes constituted literary judgment. Thus the increase in interpretation over literary judgment would indicate more maturity of perception, a desirable result of the study of literature. In order to stimulate attempts at interpretation, it may be helpful for the teacher to avoid supplying "correct" interpretations, especially before the work is read by the student.

Students may begin their involvement with literature in a comparatively groping and emotional fashion; their later attempts at interpretation tend to be sharply formulated and logical. If the instructor wishes to encourage individual and honest reactions to literature, he should refrain from demanding that these first feelings or empathies be fully described or logically argued for. But as the study of the work of literature moves into the period of grappling with real difficulties—of discussion and argument about the interpretation and meaning of the work—the instructor should make increasingly stringent demands: citation of the text, analysis of the citation, and coherent inference on the basis of other relevant passages. In other words, the instructor can expect analysis to be made explicit at this point.

The exceptional student may maintain empathy during "sustained contact" with the work, joining personal involvment and analysis. This is rewarding to the instructor and certainly to the student himself, but can hardly be expected of most students. If the typical student can be induced first to involve himself in the work and then to attempt interpretation with discrimination, a real encounter with literature will have taken place.

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